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SOVIET POLICY TOWARD
STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTIONS,
1982-1987

by

KERRY M. KARTCHNER
//

MAY 1988

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GLOSSARY

ALCM	Air-Launched Cruise Missile
FBS	Forward Based Systems
GLCM	Ground-Launched Cruise Missile
ICBM	Intercontinental-range Ballistic Missile
INF	Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces
MIRV	Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicle
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SICBM	Small Intercontinental-range Ballistic Missile
SLBM	Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile
SLCM	Submarine-Launched Cruise Missile
SNDV	Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicle
SRAM	Short-range Attack Missile (bomber delivered)
SSBN	ballistic missile submarine
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

I. INTRODUCTION

It seems almost certain that the U.S. and Soviet Union will follow up the December 1987 signing of an INF accord with the culmination of an agreement on drastically reducing long-range nuclear forces sometime in 1988. The joint statement issued at the conclusion of the Washington Summit called for completing a draft "in time for signature of the treaty during the next meeting of leaders of state in the first half of 1988."¹

Over the past several years, the arms control spotlight has been alternately dominated by INF and strategic defenses (SDI and the ABM Treaty). Very little scholarly attention has been given to issues of strategic arms reductions. With an INF agreement signed and on its way to ratification, political and academic attention should shift to START, where, according to American and Soviet sources, an agreement between the U.S. and Soviet Union is imminent.

A START agreement of the kind currently taking shape at the negotiating table in Geneva poses several challenges to U.S. defense policy. These challenges must be understood for adequate choices to be made concerning the future of U.S. strategic forces policy. A clear presentation of the evolution of the impending START agreement will constitute a major part of such an understanding.

¹ "Joint Statement By Reagan, Gorbachev," Washington Post, 11 Dec. 1987.

There are at least three major challenges for U.S. deterrence policy that can profitably be addressed on the basis of an examination of the evolution of a START agreement. First, it is important to understand how U.S. objectives in START evolved, and the degree to which they were achieved. Such an understanding will require a net assessment of U.S. success or failure in the START negotiations.

Second, it is equally important to understand how Soviet attitudes and policies towards key START issues evolved over the 1982-1988 time frame. For example, the Soviets consistently referred to the START negotiations during the 1982-1983 period as the "negotiations on arms limitation and reduction," signifying their preference for retaining SALT II-type limitations rather than effecting deep cuts in offensive nuclear arsenals.

Soviet START priorities reflected elements of drastic change, such as the shift in preconditions for a START agreement demanded by Soviet negotiators -- from cancellation of NATO's INF modernization to unilateral restrictions on the President's Strategic Defense Initiative. But Soviet START priorities also showed important elements of constancy -- resisting significant reductions in "heavy" ICBMs, rejecting direct limitations on ballistic missile throw-weight, and avoiding disproportionate warhead reductions.

Third, given the present Administration's series of reports on Soviet noncompliance with major arms agreements, and the public and media's reactions to these reports, it is important to examine the question of potential Soviet noncompliance with a START accord, and U.S. options for responding to potential Soviet START violations. Given the radical changes the INF Treaty and impending START agreement will effect on the American nuclear deterrence posture and

strategic forces, violations of these agreements will also be proportionately more significant than violations of previous agreements. The U.S. must be prepared to deal with the possibility of Soviet noncompliance with a START agreement. This research effort will be conducted with a view to address this critical dimension as well.

This report examines Soviet policy towards strategic arm reductions from 1982 to 1987, a five year period that witnessed significant reversals and shifts in Soviet START policy. An examination of these particular policies will also provide the most essential insights into the role of arms control in Soviet strategy and doctrine, as well as the probability of Soviet compliance with alternative arms control regimes in the future. It may also help interpret Soviet strategic force priorities and concerns.

The United States entered the START negotiations with an approach based on a clearly defined set of premises, albeit these premises were the source of considerable contention within the strategic studies community. The first premise was that the United States was in a strategically inferior position relative to the Soviet Union. Specifically, U.S. strategic nuclear forces were, or soon would be, vulnerable to Soviet superiority in powerful, hard-target killing, land-based ICBM warheads. This superiority was most accurately reflected, Reagan administration officials believed, in terms of both the number of warheads on land-based ICBMs as well as throw-weight, an aggregate measurement of the warheads, penetration aides, and overall payload a missile could carry. Throw-weight was considered the best means of comparing the destructive potential of the two sides' nuclear forces. At the beginning of START, the Soviet Union had a 3 to 1 superiority in total throw-weight over the United States.

The Reagan administration also had clear notions of what had caused this situation. The main cause, in the administration's view, was SALT, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, which had been held from 1969 to 1979, and which had resulted in several agreements and treaties on strategic arms.

Of these agreements, candidate, and later President Reagan charged that the SALT II Treaty in particular was "fatally flawed" for the following reasons: (1) it would have permitted substantial growth in both sides' nuclear forces; (2) it limited launchers, and not warheads or throw-weight; (3) it sanctioned the Soviets' unilateral right to maintain 308 "heavy" ICBMs with no compensating American privilege; (4) it excluded the Soviet Backfire bomber; (5) its Protocol set an undesirable precedent for limiting U.S. INF systems (cruise missiles) without restrictions on comparable Soviet systems; (6) it lacked sufficiently rigorous verification procedures; and, (7) it promoted, rather than ameliorated, adverse trends in the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance. The Reagan administration was determined to rectify these problems, and since they had been largely caused by a faulty approach to arms control, the administration was determined to avoid such an approach to arms control in the future.

Therefore, the Reagan approach to START sought to avoid the fatal mistakes of SALT by seeking to reduce (as opposed to merely limiting) warheads and throw-weight instead of launchers. This approach was entirely consistent with the Reagan administration's view of the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance, what had caused it to shift in favor of the Soviets, and what it would take to restore it.

The numerous Soviet proposals made since the opening of START in 1982 provide the principal data for analysis in this report. Four key issues have been selected for focused

attention in this report. They are: (1) Soviet policy toward "deep cuts" in strategic offensive nuclear weapons; (2) throw-weight limitations; (3) reductions in "heavy" ICBMs; and, (4) warheads as a unit of limitation. These four issues have been chosen from among the many complex issues examined in START for their direct relevance to Soviet strategic force posturing.

An important Soviet arms control priority is effecting reductions or severe limitations in the modernization of U.S. strategic nuclear weapons. Soviet attitudes towards reductions in U.S. nuclear forces do not tell us much about Soviet objectives and priorities relating to their own forces. Therefore, the four issues selected for attention in this report mainly represent important U.S. proposals for reductions in Soviet forces, and reveal Soviet attitudes towards reductions in their own forces, as well as those of the United States. Each issue was at one time or another an important element of U.S. START policy, and consequently reflected American conceptions of stability and deterrence. An examination of Soviet responses to these issues will hopefully provide a valuable contrast to U.S. thinking.

II. SOVIET STRATEGIC ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS, 1982-1987

A. Introduction

The Soviets have made numerous strategic arms reduction and/or limitation proposals since the beginning of START in 1982. The analysis in this report will be based on the evolution of Soviet START policy as demonstrated by Soviet proposals at ten different points in time from 1982 to 1987. These include:

1. The Initial 1982 Soviet START Proposals
2. The Soviet START Position at the End of 1983
3. The Soviet January 1985 "Umbrella" Talks Opening Position
4. The September/October 1985 USSR Comprehensive Proposal
5. The Soviet Position at the 19-21 November 1985 Geneva Summit
6. The 15 January 1986 "Soviet Program for Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons in the World"
7. The 11 June 1986 Gorbachev Proposal For Thirty Percent Cuts
8. The Soviet Position at the 11-12 October 1986 Reykjavik Summit
9. The Soviet START Position as of May 1987
10. The U.S. and Soviet START Positions at the December 1987 Washington Summit

The following discussion seeks to give a brief overview of the essential features of these nine Soviet START proposal or positions during the 1982-1987 period. The purpose is to show fundamental trends in the Soviet START position as it evolved over the five year period under discussion.

B. The Initial Soviet START Proposals

The initial Soviet START proposal was enunciated by Leonid Brezhnev in a speech to an internal audience, the All-Union Komsomol Congress, on 18 May 1982.² While establishing certain conditions for the success of the talks, Brezhnev's proposal was very simple, with a high degree of appeal to popular sentiment. It called for a ban or restriction on "new types" of strategic nuclear weapons and proposed a freeze on strategic nuclear weapons as soon as the talks were to begin (often referred to in the U.S. as a "negotiator's freeze"). It did not place a high priority on reductions per se, but sought only to limit or freeze nuclear force modernization to forces then nearing deployment on both sides. This policy emphasis is clear evidence that the Soviets were satisfied with the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance both in terms of quantity and quality at that time, and with the SALT I and II agreements which limited, but did not reduce, U.S. and Soviet strategic arsenals.

² "Brezhnev: USSR Is Ready for Arms Talks," Current Digest of the Soviet Press, 34, 20 (16 June 1982): 1-3, 23; Dusko Doder, "Soviets Call U.S. Plan 'Unfair, Unrealistic,'" Washington Post, 19 May 1982. An analysis of Brezhnev's speech can be found in Sallie Wise, "Brezhnev Announces Soviet Position on Strategic Arms Reduction Talks," Radio Liberty Research, RL 206/82, 18 May 1982.

More detailed elements of their opening position soon surfaced in the Western media, revealing somewhat more substance than Brezhnev's Komsomol speech, but emphasizing the Soviet desire to seek limitations if possible, and modest reductions if necessary.³

Provisions of the Soviets' opening START position reportedly included the following:

- reductions to a common ceiling of 1800 long-range missiles and bombers by 1990;
- a limit of 4 to 6 on the numbers of Typhoon and Trident class submarines to be permitted (with a maximum of 16 tubes on each ballistic missile submarine, or SSBN);
- a ban or limit on cruise missiles with ranges greater than 600 km or 360 mi;
- inclusion of confidence-building measures (such as advance warning of missile test flights);
- a freeze on development and deployment of new systems to run concurrently with the negotiations;
- a linkage of progress in START to Intermediate-range Nuclear Force (INF) negotiations (where the Soviet

³ For accounts of the opening Soviet START positions, see Charles R. Gellner, U.S. and Soviet Proposals in Negotiations to Reduce Strategic Armaments (START) -- Brief Outlines, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 1 Jan. 1984; Leslie H. Gelb, "Offer by Moscow to Curb Bombers and Missiles Cited," New York Times, 1 Aug. 1982; Michael Getler, "Officials Cite Options Offered in Missile Talks," Washington Post, 1 Aug. 1982; and Robert C. Toth, "U.S. Weighs Surprising Soviet Offer on A-Arms," Los Angeles Times, 13 Sept. 1982. It should be noted that on 3 Aug. 1982, administration officials said that public reports of the Soviet's negotiating position were "fundamentally in error" but did not elaborate, citing the confidential nature of the talks; see Reuter news bulletin in Boston Globe, 4 Aug. 1982, as cited in The Arms Control Reporter, Sept. 1982, p. 611.B.43.

position was for complete cancellation of plans to deploy U.S. Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles);

- a twenty-five percent reduction across the board in the strategic nuclear arsenals of both sides;
- retention of SALT II counting rules and precedents (for example, with regard to cruise missiles and SALT II provisions for ICBM modernization).
- a moratorium on untested strategic nuclear systems;
- an unspecified overall ceiling on the number of long-range missile and bomber-carried warheads; and,
- verification by National Technical Means (NTM).

This proposal was obviously designed to block or neutralize modernization of key elements of the U.S. nuclear triad. For example, it would have effected reductions in overall launchers of nuclear weapons, an area of traditional U.S. advantage. It also would have blocked the emergence of an anticipated U.S. lead in advanced, long-range cruise missiles. It also would have severely limited or banned future deployments of the U.S. D-5 sea-based ballistic missile on Trident submarines -- an area where the Soviets expected the largest growth in U.S. strategic nuclear warheads. The new D-5 missile will reportedly have greater accuracy, range, and yield -- enough to place at risk Soviet hardened targets.

C. The Soviet START Position at the End of 1983

During nearly eighteen months of START negotiations up to December 1983, the U.S. position went through several major modifications, responding first to the April 1983 report of the Scowcroft Commission recommending deployment of MX and

development of the Small Intercontinental-range Ballistic Missile (ICBM), to the Fall 1983 so-called "build-down" proposal fashioned by members of the United States Congress, that called for removing proportionately more warheads from the stockpile as new ones were added. Of course, there were also several moves to make the U.S. position more responsive to Soviet criticisms. That is to say, the U.S. sought to make its position more negotiable.

The Soviet START position prior to walking out of the talks at the end of 1983 included only one significant modification to Moscow's opening proposals. This change apparently emerged during the Fourth Round of START in the summer of 1983. It involved the following concessions:⁴

- withdrawing the demand that the United States deploy no more than four to six Trident-equipped submarines;
- dropping the proposal that Trident missile loading be reduced from 24 to 16;
- softening the demand for a total ban on all cruise missiles with ranges greater than 360 miles, to allow 120 cruise missile-equipped bombers;

⁴ Michael Getler, "Soviets Modify Part of Position on Missile Cuts," Washington Post, 28 June 1983; William Beecher, "Soviets Hint at Some Flexibility in Arms Talks, US Officials Say," Boston Globe, 26 June 1983; and "Arms-Talk Softening Reported," Associated Press in Denver Post, 26 June 1983. For details of the Soviet July 1983 proposal, see: Michael Getler, "Soviets Advance Revised Proposal On Arms Limits," Washington Post, 13 July 1983; Hedrick Smith, "Soviet Broadens Arms Proposals; Hope Seen By U.S.," New York Times, 14 July 1983; Charles W. Corddry, "Soviet Arms Offer Said to Keep Rockets," Baltimore Sun, 14 July 1983; William Beecher, "Arms Talks: A Hint of Flexibility," Boston Globe, 14 July 1983; and, William Beecher, "Soviet Hinting Thaw?" Boston Globe, 15 July 1983.

- o apparent hints at Soviet willingness to seriously consider U.S. proposals for confidence-building measures by agreeing to participate in a special working group on that subject; and,
- o a proposal for phased reductions in total Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicles (SNDVs), MIRVed ballistic missiles (SLBMs/ICBMs), and MIRVed ICBMs (given in Table 1 below).

Table 1

SOVIET PROPOSED START REDUCTION TIMETABLE (July 1983)

	<u>1985</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1990</u>
SNDV	= 2,250	2,000	1,800
MIRVed missiles	= 1,320	1,250	1,200
MIRVed ICBMs	= 820	750	680

As of the end of 1983 the Soviet position on START comprised the following elements:⁵

- o an interim freeze on strategic nuclear weapons while negotiations were underway;
- o an aggregate limit of 1,800 on ICBM launchers, SLBM launchers, and heavy bombers (representing a 20 percent reduction from the SALT II limit of 2,250);
- o a sublimit of 1,200 on MIRVed ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers equipped with cruise missiles;

⁵ National Academy of Sciences, Nuclear Arms Control: Background and Issues, (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1985), p. 67.

- o a sublimit of 1,080 on MIRVed ICBM and SLBM launchers;
- o a sublimit of 680 land-based ICBM launchers;
- o unspecified equal limits on missile warheads and bomber weapons;
- o modernization constraints on the size and types of new SLBM and ICBM missiles, including SALT II-type limits on MIRV fractionation; and,
- o a ban on ground- and sea-launched cruise missiles with ranges greater than 600 km.

It should be noted that this position represents little change from the opening proposals forwarded by Moscow in the summer of 1982. Furthermore, this position is not responsive to U.S. proposals -- they did not provide for direct limitations on warheads (only launchers), nor did they address the U.S. call for some form of throw-weight limitation. Also, the Soviet START position at this point retained the fundamental structure and counting rules of the SALT II agreement, with its tiered sublimits on MIRVed SLBM and ICBM launchers.

D. The Soviet January 1985 "Umbrella" Talks Opening Position

Ending a year-long hiatus in U.S.-Soviet arms negotiations, the superpowers issued a joint communique on 8 January 1985 agreeing to form a single set of negotiations with three groups to explore space arms, strategic weapons, and intermediate range forces, thus the appellation for these

negotiations -- the "umbrella" talks.⁶ The communique stated the following objectives:

The sides agree that the subject of the negotiations will be a complex of questions concerning space and nuclear arms, both strategic and intermediate range, with all the questions considered and resolved in their interrelationship. The objective of the negotiations will be to work out effective agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear arms and at strengthening strategic stability.⁷

Much of the communique appeared to use preferred Soviet language, thus the phrase "preventing an arms race in space and terminating in on earth" -- the slogan of Soviet arms control policy since early the previous year.

The agreement that outstanding issues would be "resolved in their interrelationship," while vague and ill-defined, was clearly an agenda victory for the Soviets. The Soviets had insisted on linkages among arms control issues since the beginning of START in June 1982. At that time they had insisted on linking progress in START to resolution of their demand that NATO INF modernization be cancelled or reversed. Now they were linking the resolution of both START and INF to limits on U.S. strategic defense programs.

Total elimination of nuclear weapons was explicitly identified by the communique as an objective of the talks:

The sides believe that ultimately the forthcoming negotiations, just as efforts in general to limit and

⁶ Later the talks would become more commonly known as the "Nuclear and Space Talks," or NST.

⁷ New York Times, 9 Jan. 1985.

reduce arms, should lead to the complete elimination of nuclear arms everywhere.⁸

President Reagan had declared early in his administration that total elimination of nuclear weapons was an ultimate goal, but it had been interpreted as a general, abstract objective, with rhetorical value. Such an objective became more explicit when he launched the Strategic Defense Initiative, whose stated goal was to render nuclear weapons obsolete -- the de facto equivalent of an arms control agreement banning them.

Of course, total elimination of nuclear weapons had long been a Soviet goal, beginning with the Molotov proposals in 1945 and extending up through multiple iterations of General and Complete Disarmament proposals in the 1950s and 1960s.⁹

At the newly commenced "umbrella" talks, the Soviet opening position set two preconditions for success. First, the Soviets insisted that no agreement on any one issue would be signed or completed until the subject of negotiations in all three forums had been resolved. Second, the Soviets made restrictions on U.S. SDI in the space group a prerequisite for agreement in the INF and START groups.

Soviet proposals during the first round of the new "umbrella" talks had four basic elements. First, the Soviets revived their "freeze" proposal, calling for a halt to testing and deployment of new strategic nuclear weapons.¹⁰ Second,

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ A thorough review and analysis of Soviet disarmament proposals is given in P.H. Vigor, The Soviet View of Disarmament, (New York: St. Martin's, 1986).

¹⁰ On the Soviet proposal for an INF moratorium, see The Arms Control Reporter, Section 403, 1 May 1985. On the Soviets' strategic nuclear weapons freeze proposal, see The Arms Control Reporter, Section 611, 28 March 1985.

the Soviets proposed a one-quarter reduction in strategic offensive arms "by way of an opening move."¹¹ Third, the Soviets wanted a ban on all cruise missiles with a range of over 600 kilometers.¹² The fourth element of the Soviets' opening position was the condition that the United States refrain from initiating an arms race in space.

All these elements were virtual repetitions of Soviet START proposals from 1982 and 1983. Even the objective of preventing an arms race in space would have been achieved by accepting the Soviets' 1982 call for banning new strategic systems. At this point the reformulated negotiations seemed to offer nothing in the way of new concessions from the Soviets, only more explicit calls for restrictions in U.S. weapons programs.

E. The September/October 1985 USSR Comprehensive Proposal

During the Third Round of the Nuclear and Space Talks [NST], the Soviets proposed a series of relatively detailed reductions and limitations, fleshing out somewhat their earlier general proposals.¹³ Specifically, the Soviets called for the following:

¹¹ The Arms Control Reporter, Section 611, 26 April 1985

¹² Ibid., Section 611, 1 May 1985.

¹³ See Paul H. Nitze, "The Soviet Arms Control Counterproposal," U.S. Department of State Current Policy, No. 758, 24 Oct. 1985.

- o a 50 percent reduction in strategic "nuclear charges," apparently including all strategic and medium-range systems ¹⁴
- o a ceiling of 6,000 "nuclear charges"
- o no more than 60 percent of "nuclear charges" on any one leg of each country's triad (thus, ICBM "charges" would be limited to 3,600)
- o a ban on cruise missiles (ALCMs, SLCMs, GLCMs) with ranges in excess of 600 kilometers ¹⁵
- o a ban or severe limit on all "new" nuclear delivery systems, defined as those not tested as of an agreed date
- o agreement in START and INF to be contingent upon agreement to ban "space strike arms"

Several dimensions of the Soviet proposal at this point are worth noting. First, basic elements of the Soviet position remained unchanged from the 1982-1983 negotiations. In fact, a Soviet spokesman admitted as much on Moscow

¹⁴ Soviet counts gave U.S. 3,360 versus 2,500 for Soviets, leaving 1,680 for U.S. and 1,250 for Soviets after applying 50 percent cuts. Since the Soviets were defining "strategic" to mean weapons that could reach the territory of the other side, these figures obviously included U.S. systems in Europe and on aircraft carriers close to the Soviet Union. See, "The Arms Proposals: A Balance Sheet," New York Times, 13 Nov. 1985.

¹⁵ Based on previous Soviet proposals, the U.S. interpreted this to apply to cruise missiles with ranges greater than 600 km. See Paul H. Nitze, "The Soviet Arms Control Counterproposal."

television 22 October 1985.¹⁶ The Soviets continued to define "strategic delivery systems" as those systems that could "strike the territory of the other side."¹⁷ A ban on cruise missiles with ranges greater than 600 kilometers was retained as a key element of the Soviet START proposal. The proposed freeze on the testing and deployment of new nuclear delivery vehicles was also a holdover from the earlier negotiations, as was the linkage of a START agreement to resolution of Soviet concerns lying outside the context of strategic arms reductions (i.e. U.S. strategic defenses).

Second, the Soviets were pressing a new unit of account in the negotiations -- "nuclear charges." This oblique reference to warheads was apparently intended to encompass several types of warheads, including those on cruise missiles as well as ballistic missiles, and to counter U.S. attempts to negotiate distinct limits on certain types of warheads.

In effect, the Soviets were proposing a fifty percent reduction in U.S. long- and medium-range weapons, while on the Soviet side the fifty percent reduction would apply only to intercontinental-range weapons. The Soviets counted 3,300 'strategic' delivery vehicles on the U.S. side, including Pershing II, GLCM, nuclear-capable aircraft, bomber carried short-range attack missiles (SRAMs), as well as so-called "central SNDVs" or those based in the homelands of the two

¹⁶ At a televised press conference, Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko stated: "In the part concerning strategic and medium-range weapons, [the Soviet Union] has only repeated the positions it set forth at previous talks, which were wrecked by the United States." This was an obvious reference to the earlier START negotiations. See FBIS, Daily Report: Soviet Union, 23 Oct. 1985.

¹⁷ Paul H. Nitze, "The Soviet Arms Control Counter-proposal."

sides. A fifty percent reduction in this number would have left the United States with 1,650 vehicles for delivery of long- and medium-range weapons.

The Soviets may have anticipated that the United States would devote the bulk of this allowance to strategic weapons, leaving few if any weapons based in Europe. At least, such an outcome would have been consonant with the primary Soviet objectives in arms negotiations with the U.S. -- namely, keeping U.S. nuclear weapons out of Europe. The Soviets did in fact propose a forty percent reduction in long-range weapons specifically. This implicitly acknowledged that the overall fifty percent cuts may not have been equally composed of strategic and theater systems. The remaining ten percent reductions supposedly would have been made up by cuts in intermediate-range weapons.¹⁸ In connection with this aspect of their proposal, the Soviets insisted that the U.S. must pull out all Pershing II's unless they were to count against the 6,000 strategic warhead ceiling.

For themselves, the Soviets counted 2,504 "strategic" weapons, defined as those that could reach the territory of the United States.¹⁹ A fifty percent reduction in this number would have permitted them 1,252 delivery vehicles. The magnanimous appearance of this proposal is belied by the fact that it does not at all restrict Soviet deployments of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe.

The Soviet proposed ban on deployments of new strategic weapon systems would have precluded deployment of the U.S. MX,

¹⁸ Boston Globe, 29 Sept. 1985.

¹⁹ Note that this number exceeds the SALT II Protocol limit of 2,250 the Soviets and the U.S. were supposed to have reduced to by 1 Jan. 1983.

Small ICBM, and D-5 missiles (which had not then been tested) while permitting the deployment of Soviet SS-24 and SS-25 missiles (which had been tested).

With this proposal, Moscow introduced explicit general limits on warheads, calling for a fifty percent reduction in "nuclear charges" to 6,000 on each side, claiming the U.S. had 12,000 accountable warheads. This provision would not have set specific warhead limits for any particular type of strategic launcher, thus permitting the Soviets to deploy as many of them on land-based ICBMs -- a move the U.S. would have considered highly destabilizing as it would have preserved the very disarming first strike capability the U.S. was trying to negotiate reductions in.

The proposed ban on cruise missiles with ranges greater than 600 km would leave most Soviet cruise missiles untouched since nearly all deployed Soviet cruise missiles at that time fell short of this range limit.²⁰

Several points concerning the Soviet position as presented in the 30 September 1985 proposal should be noted. First, while this proposal incorporates the spirit of the U.S. 'build-down' proposal of Fall 1983, (i.e. warheads as the unit of limitation) it did not distinguish between bomber and missile warheads, or between SS-18 warheads and PII warheads. Second, the 6,000 warhead ceiling could be reached by the USSR without reducing any of what the U.S. considered the most destabilizing warheads -- those on the SS-18 ICBM (numbering approximately 3,000).

²⁰ The Soviets may have had difficulty controlling the accuracy of cruise missiles beyond 600 kilometers, thus accounting for their failure to deploy longer range weapons of this type earlier.

Third, the Soviet offer did not reduce the ratio of warheads to launchers (some interpretations of how it might be implemented would even exacerbate this ratio) and therefore did nothing to contribute to relieving a principal source of instability in the U.S. view -- the number of targets versus the number of warheads aimed at those targets.²¹

Fourth, this proposal indicated that the Soviets may have feared the expense of a potential arms race in strategic defense systems more than they feared any potential military/strategic threat posed by offensive strategic or intermediate range systems.

Finally, as were Soviet START and INF proposals, these proposals were obviously aimed at ensuring the preservation of overwhelming Soviet nuclear superiority in Europe by counting U.S. systems not necessarily deployed on the European continent, such as aircraft based on U.S. aircraft carriers.

F. The Soviet Position at the 19-21 November 1985 Geneva Summit

Prior to the Geneva Summit, the Soviets made a number of overtures regarding strategic nuclear weapons reductions in an apparent attempt to appear flexible going into the summit meetings and to place the ball in Reagan's court. In early October comments by an unnamed "senior Soviet bloc diplomat" explicitly linked MX to the SS-24, the Small ICBM to the SS-25, and the Stealth bomber to an advanced Soviet bomber.²² It was later suggested that the Soviet Union might be willing to

²¹ This was the pervading logic of the Scowcroft Commission of 1983.

²² See William Beecher, Boston Globe, 10 Oct. 1985.

trade these systems off against each other, an unusual offer to give up deployed Soviet systems for non-deployed American weapons.²³

The Reagan-Gorbachev summit meeting in Geneva on 19-21 November 1985 yielded no substantive outcome in terms of nuclear arms control agreements. U.S. and Soviet leaders signed agreements relating to academic, cultural, and performing arts exchanges; the opening of new consulates in Kiev and New York; improving communications and cooperation to avoid commercial airline accidents in the North Pacific area; and, the holding of regular high-level meetings to discuss political issues.²⁴

The Soviets reportedly restated their basic positions on reductions of strategic weapons, and again demanded restrictions on U.S. strategic defenses as the price for their agreement to other arms control issues.²⁵ On the topic of strategic arms reductions, the joint statement issued at the end of the summit meetings stated:

Noting the proposals recently tabled by the U.S. and the Soviet Union, [the President and the General Secretary] called for early progress, in particular in areas where there is common ground, including the principle of 50 percent reductions in the nuclear arms o

²³ See William Beecher, Boston Globe, 14 Nov. 1985. Later this same diplomat said that civilian and military policy-makers who had opposed the fifty percent cuts proposal had been removed from their posts in the Soviet Union to clear the way for U.S.-Soviet agreement on that issue, and that the U.S.S.R. had never made so radical a proposal.

²⁴ See "Text of Joint U.S.-Soviet Statement," Washington Post, 22 Nov. 1985; and, "A Summary of the Geneva Talks," New York Times, 22 Nov. 1985.

²⁵ Roland Powell, "Reagan Reports Some Progress Achieved on Nuclear Arms Cuts," Monterey Herald, 22 Nov. 1985.

the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. appropriately applied, as well as the idea of an interim I.N.F. agreement.²⁶

G. The 15 January 1986 "Soviet Program for Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons in the World"

On 15 January 1986 Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev proposed a "Soviet Program for Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons in the World."²⁷ According to excerpts printed in the New York Times it encompassed a three stage reduction plan, stage one to last from 1986 to 1990, stage two 1990 to 1995, and stage three the years 1995 to 2000.²⁸

Stage one would involve a 50 percent reduction in Soviet and American nuclear arms capable of reaching each other's territory, a ceiling of 6,000 warheads on these arms; a mutual pledge by the Soviet Union and the United States not to develop, test, or deploy "strike weapons" in space; complete elimination by the Soviet Union and the United States of their ballistic and medium-range cruise missiles in Europe, combined with a pledge by the United States not to supply strategic or medium-range missiles to other countries and a pledge by Britain and France not to build up their respective nuclear

²⁶ The Arms Control Reporter, 1985, p. 611.B.276.

²⁷ See "Statement by Mikhail Gorbachev," published by Novosti Press Agency, 1986, reprinted in The Arms Control Reporter, 1986, , pp. 611.D.53-59; Serge Schmemann, "Gorbachev Offers to Scrap A-Arms by the Year 2000," New York Times, 16 Jan. 1986; Don Oberdorfer, "Moscow Proposes A Timetable for Nuclear Arms Ban," Washington Post, 16 Jan. 1986; and, "Excerpts From the Soviet Leader's Statement on Arms Control Proposals," New York Times, 17 Jan. 1986.

²⁸ See "Soviet Program for Total Abolition of Nuclear Weapons in the World," New York Times, 21 March 1986.

forces; and, a Soviet-American ban on all nuclear explosions combined with a joint call to other states to join that moratorium.

In the Second Stage (1990-1995) a freeze on tactical nuclear weapons would be initiated and joined by other countries, all nuclear powers would then scrap their tactical nuclear forces, join in a ban on space weapons, cease all nuclear testing, and agree to ban non-nuclear weapons based on new physical principles;

All remaining nuclear weapons would be scrapped in the Third Stage (1995-2000), and the Soviet Union would then agree to any verification procedures desired by the West.

The U.S. dismissed these proposals as so much propaganda and, indeed, the context of their presentation lent credibility to this charge. Many aspects of this offer would however, be incorporated in later Soviet START proposals.

H. The 11 June 1986 Gorbachev Proposal for Thirty Percent Cut

A proposal reportedly calling for a more moderate reduction was made by Soviet negotiator Karpov at a plenary meeting in Geneva on 11 June 1986.²⁹ While no percentages were specified, U.S. analysts determined the new proposal would amount to a thirty percent reduction. In specific terms, Karpov offered the following:³⁰

²⁹ "Bargaining Over Arms: How Kremlin and White House Proposals Compare," New York Times, 3 July 1986.

³⁰ William Beecher, "Soviets Unveil Proposal on Arms; US Hopeful," Boston Globe, 12 June 1986.

- o raising the proposed limit on "nuclear charges" to 8,000 (from 6,000), with no more than 60 percent deployed on any one leg of the triad;
- o limit SNDVs to 1600
- o permitting SLCMs on submarines, but counting them toward the total SNDV ceiling;
- o banning SLCMs on surface ships;
- o dropping the inclusion of so-called U.S. forward-based systems (FBS) from the SNDV ceiling
- o a U.S. freeze on medium-range weapons in Europe (and on aircraft carriers near the Soviet Union)
- o banning new types of ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers

The Soviet proposal included other INF and space arms provisions and would have had the effect of limiting ICBM warheads to 4,800 for each side (60 percent).

I. The Soviet Position at the 11-12 October 1986 Reykjavik Summit

At the October 1986 summit meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, the U.S. and Soviet Union agreed to cut nuclear warheads on ballistic missiles and ALCMs to a common ceiling of 6,000.

Missiles and bombers were to be reduced to a total of 1,600. The two sides agreed to postpone limits on SLCMs.³¹

Additionally, there were some important areas of disagreement. The U.S. expressed a desire to eliminate all ballistic missiles after ten years, while the Soviet Union proposed to eliminate all strategic offensive weapons after 15 years, and again linked such reductions to restrictions on the U.S. SDI program.³² The Soviets apparently introduced the SDI linkage late in the talks when it appeared that the U.S. was on the verge of accepting the Soviet proposal for a total elimination of nuclear weapons.

J. The Soviet START Position as of May 1987

In the early summer of 1987, the momentum of progress seemed to favor an INF agreement before resolution of either START or space arms issues, a priority that had been agreed

³¹ See, *inter alia*, Bernard Gwertzman, "Reagan-Gorbachev Talks End in Stalemate as U.S. Rejects Demand to Curb 'Star Wars,'" New York Times, 13 Oct. 1986; Leslie H. Gelb, "Sticking Points in Iceland," New York Times, 13 Oct. 1986; Frederick Kempe and John Walcott, "Impasse in Iceland," Wall Street Journal, 31 Oct. 1986; President Reagan, "The Significance of Reykjavik," U.S. Department of State Current Policy, No. 880, 14 Oct. 1986; Don Oberdorfer, "At Reykjavik Soviets Were Prepared and U.S. Improvised," Washington Post, 16 Feb. 1987; U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, The Reykjavik Talks: Promise or Peril, Report of the Subcommittee on Arms Control, International Security and Science, Jan. 1987, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GPO, 1987); and, The Arms Control Reporter, 1987, p. 611.A.4-5.

³² Bernard Gwertzman, "Reagan-Gorbachev Talks End in Stalemate as U.S. Rejects Demand to Curb 'Star Wars,'" New York Times, 13 Oct. 1986; and, Leslie H. Gelb, "Sticking Points in Iceland," New York Times, 13 Oct. 1986.

upon at the November 1985 Geneva Summit. The Soviets seemed willing to reach a separate agreement on INF. However, a picture of the Soviet position on START as of May 1987 can be pieced together. It had the following provisions:

- 50 percent reductions in strategic offensive arms by the end of 1991
- total elimination of strategic offensive arms by the end of 1996
- no START agreement without a space weapons agreement first³³
- 1,600 ceiling on SNDVs (SLBMs, ICBMs, bombers) ³⁴
- 6,000 warhead ceiling, to include ICBM, SLBM warheads, long-range ALCMs, and heavy bombers with SRAMs and gravity bombs (each bomber to count as one warhead)³⁵
- 50 percent across the board reductions to apply to heavy ICBMs ³⁶, earlier proposals called for sublimits of 80-85 percent of warheads on ballistic missiles and 60 percent of warheads on any one leg of the triad ³⁷ (would yield 1540 SS-18 warheads, SS-18 only existing heavy ICBM) [U.S. proposed sublimit of 1650 on heavy ICBMs]
- SLCM limitations postponed to special negotiations ³⁸

³³ The Arms Control Reporter, 2 March 87, and 5 April 1987.

³⁴ Ibid., 6 Nov. 1986

³⁵ Ibid., 30 Sept. 1985

³⁶ Ibid., 6 Nov. 1986

³⁷ Ibid., 30 Sept. 1985

³⁸ Ibid., 11-12 Oct. 1986, and 5 April 1987

- U.S. FBS not counted ³⁹
- Soviets would permit modernization, U.S. would ban modernization of heavy ICBMs ⁴⁰
- Mobile missiles were to be permitted, although the U.S. called for banning them. ⁴¹

Some sources in the United States anticipated that the 5 percent reduction in strategic offensive arms would result in 50 percent reduction in Soviet throw-weight. The U.S. START position at that time called for a 50 percent reduction from the current Soviet level. At this point, the Soviets continued to reject specific direct limits on throw-weight.

There seemed to be some U.S. and Soviet convergence on three dimensions of a START agreement as of this time. First that reductions would be fifty percent over a five year period. Second, there would be a ceiling of 6,000 warheads permitted both sides, and this ceiling would exclude tactical or theater nuclear warheads (to be treated separately). Third, there would be a ceiling of 1600 strategic nuclear delivery vehicles. ⁴²

³⁹ Ibid., 11 Oct. 1986

⁴⁰ Ibid., 8 April 1987

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Thomas Netter in New York Times, 13 Nov. 1986; Associated Press in Boston Globe, 13 Nov. 1986.

K. Basic Features of the U.S. and Soviet START Positions at the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit in Washington December 1987

Basic issues involved in the START negotiations by the time of the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit in Washington in early December 1987 included verification provisions, limits on strategic nuclear modernization, linkage of a START agreement to strategic defenses and observance of the ABM Treaty, warhead sublimits, cruise missile range and total warhead limits, how to define counting rules for MIRVed missiles and bombers, and mechanisms for compliance consultation once a treaty had been signed.

As reflected in the Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of the Washington summit, the two sides had reached agreement on many features of a draft START agreement that would implement the principle of 50 percent reductions, and that would be ready in time for the two leaders to sign it at their next summit set for "the first half of 1988" in Moscow. Other specific provisions included:⁴³

- o a ceiling of 1,600 on SNDVs
- o a ceiling of 6,000 strategic nuclear warheads (on ICBMs, SLBMs, and long-range bombers);
- o a sublimit of 1,540 warheads on no more than 154 heavy ICBMs (SS-18s);
- o agreement on counting rules for heavy bombers (i.e. bombers with SRAMs and gravity bombs, but no cruise

⁴³ "Joint Statement By Reagan, Gorbachev," Washington Post, 11 Dec. 1987.

missiles, would count as one warhead regardless of the number of nuclear explosives they carried);

- o indirect reductions in ballistic missile throw-weight to 50 percent of the existing level; and,
- o non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for an as yet unspecified period of time (7 to 10 years).

In addition, the two sides agreed that:

Intensive discussions of strategic stability shall begin not later than three years before the end of the specified period, after which, in the event the sides have not agreed otherwise, each side will be free to decide its course of action. Such an agreement must have the same legal status as the treaty on strategic offensive arms, the ABM Treaty, and other similar, legally binding agreements.⁴⁴

Verification procedures were to be based on the framework adopted in the INF Treaty, calling for a series of inspections over a 10 to 13 year period to verify destruction of proscribed weapons and to monitor known production facilities.

Many of these provisions appeared to represent a resounding success for U.S. START policy. In particular, the Soviets had agreed to reductions in heavy missiles and their warheads. However, this probably reflects a Soviet assessment that fixed silo-based missiles were becoming increasingly vulnerable to preemption by new generation U.S. MX and Trident missiles, and that more of its warhead inventory should be shifted to mobile basing modes. Banning mobile missile basing was an issue conspicuously absent from the joint statement.

There were other areas of apparent disagreement. The U.S. did not secure direct and specific limits on throw-

⁴⁴ Ibid.

weight. The joint statement does not make clear which "existing level" is to be the benchmark for the 50 percent reductions -- the U.S. (1.8 mkg) or the Soviet level (5.6 mkg)?

Another issue that did not appear in the text of the joint statement regards sublimits for intercontinental ballistic missiles. The U.S. wanted two warhead sublimits, one for ICBMs and SLBMs combined,⁴⁵ and one for reducing ICBM warheads in particular to 3,300. The Soviets apparently were resisting both of these categories of sublimitation, and the United States was reportedly prepared to drop its demand for the ICBM sublimit in return for other Soviet concessions.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ The U.S. proposed a ceiling of 4,800 ballistic missile warheads, while the Soviets countered with an offer of 5,100. See Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Details Objectives For Summit," Washington Post, 6 Dec. 1987. Later reports seem to indicate a compromise might have been reached on a figure of 4,900 ICBM and SLBM warheads.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

III. SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS STRATEGIC NUCLEAR ARMS REDUCTIONS, 1982-1983

A. Introductory Remarks

The main Soviet objective in START, as it was in Soviet foreign policy in general, was to perpetuate the existing strategic balance between U.S. and Soviet nuclear forces. The Soviets insisted that this balance was characterized by parity. To maintain that parity, the Soviets frequently invoked the principle of "equality and equal security" as the preferred (indeed, only) basis for an agreement.⁴⁷ In effect the Soviets used this principle to mean that they should have the right to military forces equal to all potential enemies combined. In practice that meant including French and British (and sometimes Chinese) nuclear forces in the U.S. totals.⁴⁸

Additionally, the Soviet Union sought in START to exploit and maximize U.S. domestic pressures to restrict the growth and realization of President Reagan's strategic modernization program. The Soviets did this by promoting an arms control process that fulfilled Soviet arms control objectives without

⁴⁷ For two Soviet commentaries on the meaning of "equality and equal security" see V. E. Petrovskiy, "The Strategic Balance Is an Essential Condition for a Secure World," SShA: Ekonomika, Politika, Ideologiya, No. 7 (July 1985): 39-50; and, V. K. Sobakin, Ravnaya Bezopasnost': Printsip Ravenstva I Odnikakovoy Bezopasnosti V Sovremennoy Mezhdunarodnykh Otnosheniakh [Equal Security: The Principle of Equality and Equal Security in Contemporary International Relations], Moscow, 1984.

⁴⁸ See Nathaniel Davis, "'Equality and Equal Security' in Soviet Foreign Policy," Essays on Strategy and Diplomacy, No. 5, Claremont, CA: Keck Center for International Strategic Studies, Fall 1985.

necessitating an agreement on deep reductions in strategic arms. The Soviets made every effort to focus this process and U.S. weapons systems in two respects. First, the Soviets warned that U.S. weapons systems then being developed would wreck the chances for arms control should they be deployed. Second, the Soviets sought to portray U.S. weapons as the principal source of instability in the international system. Soviet weapons were invariably portrayed as defensive measures reluctantly undertaken as responses to aggressive U.S. "warmongering." All this played on the expectations Americans placed in the START negotiating process.

Soviet START proposals during this time appear to have had a large propaganda content. This is evidenced by: (1) Soviet emphasis on a nuclear weapons freeze as opposed to substantive reductions; (2) the onslaught of Soviet criticism of the U.S. administration's negotiating position; (3) the lack of movement in Moscow's START position over the course of the negotiations; (4) the frequent appeals to European audiences and other Western audiences; and, (5) the public nature of Soviet accusations against the U.S. negotiating team and its positions.

Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko gave a speech to the Supreme Soviet on 16 June 1983. Among other things he noted that the Soviet Union was determined to proceed "on the basis of the existing parity, along the road of arms limitation and reduction so that at any given moment the balance is preserved but on an increasingly lower level."⁴⁹ In this speech, Gromyko stressed that U.S.-Soviet agreements "must be based on the principle of equality and equal

⁴⁹ "Excerpts From Gromyko Speech Reviewing Soviet Union's Foreign Policy," New York Times, 17 June 1983.

security," making it clear that the Soviet Union perceived the strategic balance differently than did the U.S.⁵⁰ The following paragraphs will show how the Soviets rebuffed U.S. attempts to use START to establish a more stable strategic relationship than had been formed by SALT I and II.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

B. Soviet Policy Towards "Deep Cuts"

There were five important dimensions to Soviet policy towards substantial reductions in offensive nuclear forces in the 1982-1983 period. First, Soviet criticisms of U.S. "deep cut" proposals were reflective of the low priority Moscow attributed to actually reducing weapons. U.S. proposals for such were vehemently criticized and dismissed as "deception" and "propaganda." Second, rather than stressing reductions, Soviet rhetoric seemed to place the highest priority on freezing the development and deployment of new strategic weapons. Third, the Soviets explicitly made American cancellation of its planned NATO INF deployments a virtual precondition for negotiations or agreements on strategic arms reductions. Fourth, when pressed to elaborate on its START proposals, Moscow made it clear that it defined "strategic" weapons as those that could reach the territory of the other side, regardless of their range or mode of deployment. This was a Soviet definition used in both the SALT I and SALT II negotiations, and was intended to include NATO nuclear weapons in the U.S. total, while excluding Soviet short-, medium-, and intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe. Fifth, Soviet reactions to U.S. proposals for strategic arms cuts were affected by a marked preference for retaining SALT II counting rules. These five aspects of Soviet policies toward START are developed in the paragraphs below.

1. Soviet Criticisms of U.S. "Deep Cuts" Proposals

The Soviet Union adamantly rejected "deep cuts" in offensive nuclear firepower as proposed by President Reagan,

and heavily criticized the American position on this matter. The principal Soviet criticism regarding the substance of President Reagan's Eureka College proposals was that they were, in Brezhnev's phrase, "absolutely unilateral in nature."⁵¹ Other Soviet officials were quoted as calling the proposals "unfair and unrealistic."⁵² Soviet criticisms of the U.S. START proposals revolved around the following points

- (1) they would require greater reductions in Soviet land-based missiles than in American land-based missiles;
- (2) they would involve 'troublesome' verification problems;
- (3) the U.S. was using START to compensate for faulty American force decisions of the 1960s;
- (4) implementation of the U.S. START proposals would upset the then-existing strategic balance;
- (5) U.S. START proposals excluded limits on strategic nuclear systems the U.S. was then developing; and,
- (6) Reagan's START proposals were largely propaganda, motivated by the need to mollify the antinuclear peace movement both in Europe and the U.S.

⁵¹ See "Brezhnev's Nuclear Response," Baltimore Sun, 19 May 1982.

⁵² Dusko Doder, "Soviets Call U.S. Plan 'Unfair, Unrealistic,'" Washington Post, 18 May 1982.

On the first point, the U.S. had been trying since SALT I to "move the Russians out to sea."⁵³ This meant urging the Soviets to shift a larger proportion of their warheads to submarine-launched ballistic missiles on the grounds that a sea-based force was more survivable, and hence more stabilizing since it could not be destroyed in a surprise attack.

The second point regarding "troublesome" verification problems is curious, since it was most often the Americans who complained about verifiability. It can only be concluded that the Soviets were picking up this objection to Reagan's START proposals from U.S. critics who had asserted that verification difficulties would impede the effectiveness of the kinds of reductions in destabilizing systems Reagan had envisioned.

The third point, that the U.S. was using START to compensate for faulty nuclear force decisions of the 1960s, warrants clarification. According to Soviet arguments cited in the U.S. press, Americans were "trying to change the rules of the game to correct a decision made two decades ago: to opt for the smaller but accurate Minuteman apparently on the assumption that the Soviets would not be capable of improving their huge SS-11 rocket."⁵⁴

The fourth point, that U.S. nuclear weapon modernization plans would upset the existing strategic balance, was to be a consistent Soviet theme throughout START. It is especially interesting because this was also a key Soviet criticism of

⁵³ The phrase quoted is from Strobe Talbott, Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II, (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 163, 207-208. See also John Newhouse, Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), pp. 177-78.

⁵⁴ Doder, "Soviets Call U.S. Plan 'Unfair, Unrealistic'.

NATO's Intermediate-range Nuclear Force modernization efforts in the INF negotiations, and it would later form the basis of much Soviet criticism of the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). This theme in Soviet commentaries on INF, START, and SDI suggests two points. One, the Soviets were satisfied with the status of the strategic "equilibrium" (to use the common Soviet term) as it was perceived by them prior to the beginning of NATO INF deployments in the fall of 1983. Two, the Soviets perceived NATO's INF deployments as upsetting that "equilibrium" despite the modest (almost token) number of weapons to be deployed by NATO (571 warheads on U.S. Pershing II and cruise missiles compared to over 1,200 on Soviet SS-20s) and the fact that they were to be deployed over a five year period (maximizing the opportunity for Soviet political interference in their deployment).

The balance of strategic nuclear power in place at the beginning of START was, in part, the product of the SALT process. This partially explains Soviet interests in retaining basic elements of the SALT framework, with its emphasis on launchers as the principal unit of limitation (instead of warheads or throw-weight), its high ceilings on MIRVed systems, and its failure to restrict Soviet "heavy" ICBMs.

In connection with the criticism that implementing U.S. START proposals would upset the existing strategic balance, the Soviets also charged that these proposals did not meet the requirement of "equality and equal security."⁵⁵ One Soviet commentator expanded on this theme:

So far, neither the president nor his close advisers have been able to come up with valid arguments and facts

55 Ibid.

confirming that parity in strategic forces does not exist and that the balance is in favor of the Soviet Union.

Of course, if one weapons system of the strategic triad is singled out, one can find disparity. But there is ample and effective compensation for such disparity in the triad's other components.⁵⁶

The fifth element of Soviet criticisms of Reagan's Eureka START proposals was Brezhnev's claim that they intentionally excluded "those types of strategic weapons that [the U.S.] at present is developing most intensively." Brezhnev was specifically referring to submarine-launched ballistic missiles and strategic bombers.⁵⁷ Attention might be called to two implications of this particular criticism. First, it is profoundly typical of Soviet negotiating practice to exclude or minimize limitations on systems the Soviets are currently developing, especially when those systems are designed to play key roles in the accomplishment of Soviet war-fighting objectives. Second, the Soviets may in fact be revealing genuine concern with certain U.S. systems they consider particularly "de-stabilizing" from their point of view.

On the sixth aspect of Soviet criticisms, Novosti commentator Gennady Gerasimov referred to the alleged propaganda intent of Reagan's Eureka START proposals when he said: "What also makes one wary is the opinion voiced by political analysts to the effect that underlying the president's need for an impressive speech were tactical motives of current policy rather than principles of peace considerations." He also noted that President Reagan planned

⁵⁶ Vladimir Alexeev of the Novosti Press Agency Moscow in a letter to New York Times, 24 May 1982.

⁵⁷ See Wise, "Brezhnev Announces Soviet Position," p. 2.

a visit to Europe soon after his Eureka speech, implying that Europeans may have been as much the intended audience for Reagan's proposals as the Soviets.⁵⁸

There was also a charge of U.S. disingenuousness. In a major speech to the Supreme Soviet on 16 June 1983, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko stressed the following theme:

While the United States' current approach to the Geneva negotiations has the appearance of flexibility, this is purely for show, and is intended "to lull . . . to deceive public opinion, [and] to neutralize the mounting opposition to Washington's militaristic preparations."⁵⁹

The Soviet government news agency TASS responded to the U.S. START posture by accusing the President of (1) "deceiving public opinion" regarding the degree of U.S. flexibility, and (2) charging that U.S. proposals were intended "to continue the race along the channels of improving the quality of missiles and bombers." The Soviet rejoinder stressed that there had been no basic change in the American position, and tediously reiterated the charge that (3) U.S. proposals were a mask to cover American intentions of achieving nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union.

58 Doder, "Soviets Hit U.S. Plan." This same article contains the following interesting comment: "Soviet sources said privately that the plan may have a 'psychological effect' in the struggle for popular opinion. It makes it almost impossible for Moscow to reject it outright." Note that, once again, a Soviet criticism reveals Soviet intentions as much as it indicts American policies. The principal audience for much of Soviet arms control policy in this period was the West European public.

59 "Excerpts From Gromyko Speech Reviewing Soviet Union's Foreign Policy," New York Times, 17 June 1983.

Later, the concept of 'build-down' was criticized (whereby the superpowers would scrap more warheads as new ones were deployed): "What is meant by this is that the sides will get the right to deploy new, upgraded systems of mass annihilation as they phase out old, less effective ones." The Soviet commentary also repeated the claim that Reagan's START position was intended to protect and leave intact the President's strategic modernization program, including the MX missile, B-1 bomber and Trident II missile.⁶⁰

A few weeks later, the Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda commented on the new U.S. initiative, essentially repeating the themes found in the earlier TASS commentary. Pravda particularly stressed the notion that the new U.S. proposals were "false and fraudulent." It also referred to them as "gimmickry," saying:

At hand is a fresh propaganda invention designed to mislead people by ostentatious flexibility, to conceal the inconsistency and unacceptability of the American stand. One should not be of such a low opinion, reaching the point of vicious mockery, about the ability of people to find out the real sense of these maneuvers and fraudulent steps.⁶¹

The Pravda commentary also stressed other themes that by then had become unvaryingly typical of Soviet reactions to new U.S. initiatives in the START negotiations. Among these were:

- (1) the U.S. proposals violated the principle of "equality and equal security;"

⁶⁰ TASS commentary reported in Dusko Doder, "Soviets: Arms Offer 'Nothing but Words,'" Washington Post, 6 Oct. 1983.

⁶¹ See 23 Oct. 1983 Pravda article reported in "Reagan's Latest Arms Proposal Just 'Gimmickry,' Pravda Says," Chicago Tribune, 24 Oct. 1983.

- (2) the U.S. proposals sought sharp cuts in the most important Soviet ICBMs while also seeking to protect new American nuclear weapon programs;
- (3) the United States was seeking to use START as a means of gaining nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union; and,
- (4) the latest U.S. proposals show no evidence of real or substantive flexibility or movement from the original U.S. position.⁶²

In addition to putting the U.S. in a bad light, such criticisms may have been designed to undermine the credibility and negotiability of U.S. proposals, promote support for the current U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship, deflect criticisms of the Soviet START stance, portray U.S. inflexibility as the major obstacle to a reasonable agreement, and show the Soviet Union to be much more committed to maintaining "peace" and detente than the United States. Often, Soviet propaganda efforts (including propaganda issued in arms control forums) also sought to portray (U.S.) nuclear weapons per se as threats to peace and stability, implying that U.S. unilateral disarmament initiatives would prove American "good faith" and would be a decisive move toward international peace and security.

2. Soviet Freeze Proposals

Soviet START policies reflected a certain hierarchy of priorities. The first priority was establishing a freeze on new American nuclear weapons developments. Modest reductions

62 Ibid.

in nuclear forces was a clear second priority. Accordingly, a "freeze" in the development and deployment of strategic offensive arms was the principle Soviet position during the 1982-1983 period -- as opposed to "deep cuts," as called for by the Reagan administration.

The Soviet proposal for a nuclear weapons freeze was elaborated by Colonel General Nikolay Chervov during the course of the START negotiations in the following manner:

First, it implies a ban on quantitative increases of existing nuclear weapons (including carriers and warheads); second, it implies a ban on the production of new types of arms [---] weapons systems that have become unusable or damaged can be replaced only by similar ones, just as it is the case with replacing normal losses; third, the plan also implies that modernizing existing carriers and nuclear warheads should be banned as well.⁶³

Such a freeze on strategic weapons systems would, in Chervov's view, contribute to the political objective of detente:

The implementation of the Soviet proposal on freezing nuclear arsenals, based on the principle of equality and equal security is likely to alleviate tension and to normalize international relations.⁶⁴

Chervov incorporated the Soviet theme that a condition of strategic parity existed, and that therefore the U.S. could safely participate in such a freeze:

It is obvious that in view of the existing military-strategic balance between the USSR and the United States,

⁶³ V. Morozov, "Interview with Colonel General Nikolay Chervov," Trud [Sofia, Bulgaria], 3 Aug. 1983, p. 3, in Soviet Union: Daily Report, FBIS, 5 Aug. 1983, p. AA4.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. AA5.

an agreement on banning increases of nuclear weapons is not likely to affect the security of any country whatsoever.⁶⁵

A "negotiator's freeze" was part of the Soviet START position as of Fall 1983, when the Soviets walked out of the talks.⁶⁶

3. Reductions Linked to INF Accord

A further aspect of Soviet policy towards "deep cuts" during this period was the explicit precondition for cancellation of the NATO INF modernization before the Soviet Union would agree to progress or agreement on strategic arms reductions. Again, a hierarchy of priorities or objectives is evident. The Soviet Union was more interested in eliminating the NATO INF modernization program than in reducing the level of U.S. intercontinental-range nuclear forces. Reductions in strategic offensive arms were subordinate to resolution of INF systems.

The Soviets further proposed certain conditions for reaching a START accord. Progress in START was explicitly linked to U.S. forthcomingness in the INF negotiations. This meant cancelling the planned Pershing II and GLCM deployments as a precondition to reducing strategic arms.⁶⁷ In essence, the Soviets were asking the United States to unilaterally

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ National Academy of Sciences, Nuclear Arms Control: Background and Issues, p. 67. Gorbachev would later revive the Soviet "freeze" proposals on 22 March 1985.

⁶⁷ Gelb, "Offer by Moscow."

forego the planned INF deployments and accept stringent restrictions on cruise missiles -- all in return for both sides assuming an equal ceiling of 1,800 ICBMs and bombers and few limitations on corresponding Soviet INF deployments, and no off-setting reductions in areas of Soviet advantages.

The Soviets had originally made cancelling NATO INF modernization a precondition for beginning negotiations. Now, after having agreed to begin negotiations without such a commitment, the Soviets were making it a precondition for reaching a START agreement. It should be noted that in November 1983, when the U.S. began INF deployments, the Soviets reverted back to their original position, and made cancellation and withdrawal of Pershing II and GLCM deployments a precondition for resuming arms control negotiations.

In January 1983 Soviet officials began making threats to "reassess" their INF negotiating position if GLCM and Pershing II deployments proceeded as NATO planned. Ending the START negotiations was considered a possible element of the Soviet reassessment.⁶⁸

4. Soviet Definitions of "Strategic" Weapons Subject to Reductions

Throughout this period, the Soviets insisted on defining "strategic" weapons as those that could hit the territory of the other side. This was a revival of an issue the Americans thought they had resolved in SALT I, when the Soviets had made the same argument when defining the terms of reference for the negotiations. U.S. and Soviet negotiators in SALT I finally

⁶⁸ Bernard Gwertzman, "Reagan Is Hopeful On Missile Accord With the Russians," New York Times, 21 Jan. 1983.

came to terms on this issue by defining "strategic" weapons as those with ranges in excess of 5,000 miles.⁶⁹ SALT II retained this definition, although the Soviets also sought to include U.S. 'FBS' (Forward Based Systems) in the SALT II agreement as well. SALT II finally counted the Soviet Backfire bomber as a theater system, not subject to the regular SALT II limitations. U.S. cruise missiles deployed on ships, submarines, and on the ground were similarly excluded.

In START, however, the Soviets abandoned the SALT precedent for defining "strategic" and reintroduced their early SALT I definition. Such a definition allows the Soviet to count U.S. nuclear weapons deployed to Europe, or deployed near the Soviet Union on aircraft carriers, as "strategic" while excluding Soviet tactical and theater nuclear assets.

Of course, from the Soviet strategic planners point of view, account must be taken for all nuclear weapons that threaten Soviet military operations. The Soviet insistence on defining "strategic" weapons as those that can hit the territory of the other side, regardless of range, other capabilities, or intended mission, suggests that this is much more than a propaganda ploy (although it has very real and substantial benefits in this regard). It suggests that the Soviet strategic outlook does indeed regard such weapons as "strategic" in their potential effect. This point should not

⁶⁹ This Soviet view was reflected in their demands for inclusion of limits on U.S. FBS in the ceilings on strategic forces. See Gerard Smith, Doubletalk, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 90-92; 182-187; and, Talbott, Endgame, pp. 72, 148, 189.

be lost on Western policymakers as they contemplate the meaning of the recent INF accord in Soviet eyes.⁷⁰

5. The Soviet Preference for Preserving the SALT II Framework of Limitations

Upon arriving in Geneva for the beginning of the START negotiations, Soviet ambassador Karpov issued a statement reflecting the principal facets of the Soviet position on arms control, of which START was but one. It is clear from the statement, given below, that the Soviet Union hoped START would be in the image of a SALT-type agreement, perhaps a SALT III:

The USSR delegation has arrived in Geneva in order to hold talks with the U.S. delegation on the limitation and reduction of strategic arms and to continue that process which is vitally important to the cause of peace which was begun with the SALT-I and SALT-II agreements. The USSR is striving to do everything it should in order to rid people of the nuclear threat, to ensure a peaceful future for all people on earth. Indeed, the pledge adopted by the Soviet Union not to be first to use nuclear weapons which was announced in Leonid Ilich Brezhnev's message to the second special session of the UN General Assembly on disarmament is of historic significance.

If the other nuclear powers were to follow the Soviet Union's example, then the likelihood of the occurrence of nuclear war will be virtually reduced to nothing.

This action by the Soviet state should be a great and positive incentive also at the talks on the limitation and reduction of strategic arms.⁷¹

⁷⁰ In other words, the Soviets may very well interpret the impact of the INF accord in strategic terms.

⁷¹ Moscow Domestic Service, "Karpov Statement on START at Geneva Airport," in Daily Report: Soviet Union, FBIS, 28 June 1982, p. AA1.

Those aspects of SALT II the Soviets desired to retain were a curious assortment of limits, and included bans on the following: developing more than one "new type" ICBM; placing into earth orbit nuclear weapons or other weapons of mass destruction; ocean floor basing of ballistic or cruise missiles or launchers; basing ballistic missiles on waterborn vehicles other than submarines; and development of maneuverable, self-guided and penetrating warheads for ballistic missiles.

With regard to perpetuating the SALT II framework of limitations, the Soviets indicated a willingness to consider modifications to the treaty, but did not state what changes they might find acceptable. This was interpreted as an encouraging sign of flexibility by Western journalists.⁷²

The achievements of SALT I and II in terms of their importance to the Soviet Union cannot be understated. Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko noted the following in a speech to the Supreme Soviet on 16 June 1983 reported in the New York Times as follows:

Previous U.S.-Soviet arms agreements had "special importance" to the Soviet Union, and SALT II "could have become a serious accomplishment..."

The current U.S. administration has "derailed the SALT II treaty and broken off a whole set of negotiation that were gathering momentum or were close to achieving practical results," and "is pursuing an obstructionist line at the Soviet-American talks on these questions that are going on in Geneva."⁷³

72 Ibid.

73 See "Excerpts From Gromyko Speech Reviewing Soviet Union's Foreign Policy," New York Times, 17 June 1983.

The Soviets intended START to be a follow-on agreement to SALT II, and often referred to "SALT III" in discussions of the arms control agenda after the SALT II agreement was signed. Table 2 below gives specific elements of the Soviet START proposal along with the corresponding SALT II limits to show how early Soviet START proposals related to SALT II both in terms of units of account and specific ceilings to be agreed upon.⁷⁴ It should be noted that, in view of these figures, the Soviets obviously intended START to involve only modest reductions, if any, in offensive strategic forces.

⁷⁴ For details on the Soviet July 1983 proposal, see: Michael Getler, "Soviets Advance Revised Proposal On Arms Limits," Washington Post, 13 July 1983; Hedrick Smith, "Soviet Broadens Arms Proposals; Hope Seen By U.S.," New York Times, 14 July 1983; Charles W. Corddry, "Soviet Arms Offer Said to Keep Rockets," Baltimore Sun, 14 July 1983; William Beecher, "Arms Talks: A Hint of Flexibility," Boston Globe, 14 July 1983; and, William Beecher, "Soviet Hinting Thaw?" Boston Globe, 15 July 1983.

Table 2

SOVIET JULY 1983 START PROPOSAL AND SALT II LIMITS

July 1983 Proposal		SALT II
Total SNDV	= 1,800	2,500/2,250
MIRVed ICBMs, SLBMs, and bombers	= 1,200	1,320
MIRVed ICBMs and SLBMs	= 1,080	1,200
MIRVed ICBMs	= 680	820

This comparison with the SALT II limitations serves at least two other purposes here. First, it demonstrates the explicit Soviet objective of retaining the basic SALT II framework. Second, setting forth a START proposal so close to the SALT II limits may have been a calculated Soviet move to play on the differences over SALT II within the Reagan administration, chronicled in Strobe Talbott's book Deadly Gambits.⁷⁵ Talbott reports that some officials wanted the new U.S.-Soviet strategic arms negotiations to build on the SALT

⁷⁵ Strobe Talbott, Deadly Gambits: The Reagan administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control, (New York: Knopf, 1984).

II agreement, while others wanted a radical departure from SALT II's counting rules and perceived deficiencies.

6. Renunciation of Strategic Superiority

The Soviet Union used the START negotiations to further the deception that it had renounced strategic superiority as a military and political objective.⁷⁷ Soviet officials made many statements before and during START to the effect that the USSR had not, and was not then seeking strategic superiority over the U.S., but that the United States was determined to achieve nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union. Preventing the United States from this alleged goal was an explicit Soviet objective. For example, in June 1983, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko stated that "the United States is bent

⁷⁶ Early Reagan administration officials and advisors regarded SALT II as "fatally flawed" for the following reasons: (1) it would have permitted substantial growth in both sides' nuclear forces; (2) it limited launchers, and not warheads or throw-weight; (3) it sanctioned the Soviets' unilateral right to maintain 308 "heavy" ICBMs with no compensating American privilege; (4) it excluded the Soviet Backfire bomber; (5) the Protocol set an undesirable precedent for limiting U.S. INF systems (cruise missiles) without restrictions on comparable Soviet systems; (6) it lacked sufficiently rigorous verification procedures; and, (7) it promoted, rather than ameliorated, adverse trends in the U.S.-Soviet strategic balance.

⁷⁷ See William C. Green, Soviet Disinformation and Strategic Deception Concerning Its Nuclear Weapons Policy, Report submitted to the Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, Feb. 1984.

on achieving strategic nuclear superiority, and the Soviet Union is equally determined to prevent it.⁷⁸

During the recess between Rounds One and Two Soviet spokesmen went to work making the case for their START position to the Western media. Maj. Gen. Viktor Starodubov, the General Staff representative on the Soviet START delegation, gave a three hour "interview" to members of the Western press in which he stressed the several principal themes the Soviets had been pursuing in Geneva.⁷⁹ Starodubov made Soviet strategic objectives in START very explicit. They were:

- (1) to place limits on U.S. cruise missile developments;
- (2) to ensure that British and French independent nuclear forces were counted against the U.S. strategic total;
- (3) to impose limits on other U.S. strategic developments of concern to the Soviet Union, namely the Ohio-class nuclear ballistic missile submarine; and,
- (4) to stress the Soviet Union's commitment to "equality and equal security" as the basis of agreement.

None of these objectives explicitly included deep reductions in strategic offensive forces.

Starodubov, according to this report said that basic Soviet policy was "peace and a stable balance," and repeatedly

⁷⁸ "Excerpts From Gromyko Speech Reviewing Soviet Union's Foreign Policy," New York Times, 17 June 1983.

⁷⁹ Flora Lewis, "Soviet Arms-Control Expert Asks Nuclear Balance," New York Times, 2 Sept. 1982.

insisted that "the Soviet Union sought only a balance in strategic weapons." Starodubov further stated:

Security is our highest interest. We think it is dangerous if the United States is superior in some types of arms. The Americans could exploit superiority for political purposes, and from that, it would not be a long way to conflict.

We have always been following the United States on the arms issue. History shows that the Soviet Union has never been superior to the United States in strategic arms.⁸⁰

7. Reductions in Land- Versus Sea-Based Forces

President Reagan had early on made reductions in land-based ICBMs the focus of his START priorities, arguing that these weapons, ideally suited to surprise disarming attacks, were the most destabilizing:

The main threat to peace posed by nuclear weapons today is the growing instability of the nuclear balance. This is due to the increasingly destructive potential of the massive Soviet buildup in its ballistic missile force.

Therefore, our goal is to enhance deterrence and achieve stability through significant reductions in the most destabilizing nuclear systems -- ballistic missiles, and especially intercontinental ballistic missiles -- while maintaining a nuclear capability sufficient to deter conflict, underwrite our national security and meet our commitment to allies and friends.

80 Ibid.

81 "Text of President Reagan's Address on Nuclear Policy and East-West Ties," New York Times, 10 May 1982.

Accordingly, U.S. START proposals called for specific and significant reductions in land-based ICBMs, where the Soviets enjoyed a 1,498 to 1,054 (42 percent) advantage in 1982. For example, the U.S. proposed a limit of 1,250 on land- and sea-based missiles, of which no more than 850 could be land-based. This reflected American efforts to reduce the Soviet land-based ICBM threat to the survivability of U.S. nuclear deterrent forces.

The U.S. was particularly interested in effecting reductions in Soviet "heavy" ICBMs, with MIRVed warheads several times larger than those in the U.S. inventory, and which posed a substantial first-strike threat to U.S. hardened military assets such as command bunkers and missile silos.

The U.S. had long urged the Soviet Union to place more of its nuclear warhead arsenal on submarines. This was because U.S. strategic logic (although not Soviet strategic logic) dictated that survivability of a retaliatory force was the sine quo non of stability in the nuclear missile age.⁸³ U.S. negotiators had made such arguments in SALT and put them forth again in START.⁸⁴ And, as they had in SALT, the Soviets also rejected this logic with equal fervor in START.

In an interview published in a West German periodical, Andropov criticized this basis of the U.S. approach to START in the following terms:

⁸² Charles W. Corddry, "U.S. Offers Soviets Draft of Arms Treaty," Baltimore Sun, 8 July 1983.

⁸³ Soviet strategic logic dictates that the ability to preempt an enemy's preparations for an attack is the essence of stability because it will discourage the enemy from undertaking the attempt.

⁸⁴ Talbott, Deadly Gambits, p. 250.

. . . the United States is a sea power. We are a land power and most of our nuclear weapons were deployed on land. Now the Americans suggest reductions in land-based nuclear weapons, leaving sea-based missiles aside. We, naturally, take exception to this approach. We for our part take account of all the types of nuclear weapons available to both sides and suggest even reductions in them on both sides, reductions to the point of their eventual complete elimination.⁸⁵

The Soviet Union had not intentions of restructuring its strategic forces along lines that would emulate the American strategic triad. Its force posture was driven by its own rationale.

⁸⁵ Rudolf Augstein in Der Spiegel, cited by TASS, 24 April 1983 in USSR UN press release dated 26 April 1983, reprinted in The Arms Control Reporter, May 1983, pp. 611.B.92-93.

C. Soviet Policy Towards Throw-weight Limits

As noted earlier, an important U.S. objective in START was to redress areas of significant imbalance between U.S. and Soviet strategic nuclear forces. One such area was missile throw-weight -- the total payload capacity of a missile, considered a verifiable and accurate measurement of a missile's destructive potential as well as its capacity for carrying MIRVed warheads.

Of particular concern to U.S. officials was the vast throw-weight capacity of Soviet large ICBMs. At some point during Round Two of START the United States proposed reducing by two-thirds the numbers of SS-18 and SS-19 launchers as an indirect effort to limit Soviet throw-weight.⁸⁶

On 8 June 1983 when START resumed, the United States government put forth new proposals incorporating many of the Scowcroft Commission recommendations and bowing to heavy pressure from Congress.⁸⁷ These modifications to the early U.S. START position were tabled in draft treaty form in July 1983. These changes included agreeing to flexibility on ways to redress the U.S.-Soviet throw-weight disparity.

On 7 July 1983 the United States submitted a draft treaty at the START negotiations designed to meet certain principal Soviet objections to earlier American stances. Among others,

⁸⁶ Strobe Talbott in The Arms Control Reporter, Feb. 1983, p. 611.B.71; and, Strobe Talbott, "A Tougher Stand for START," Time, 7 Feb. 1983, p. 28.

⁸⁷ Lou Cannon, "Reagan Reveals New Plan on Arms Cut Talks," Washington Post, 9 June 1983; Karen Elliott House, "Reagan's Revisions of Arms-Control Plan Stress Flexibility, Seek a Soviet Response," Wall Street Journal, 9 June 1983; see also, "New U.S. Stance On Arms Control," cited earlier.

it proposed an unspecified ceiling on throw-weight.⁸⁸ However, throughout this first phase of the START negotiations, the Soviets adamantly refused direct limitations or reductions on missile throw-weight, as they were to do in the 1984-1987 period as well.

Soviet arguments against throw-weight as a unit of limitation stressed several themes. First, this was an issue fabricated by the Americans for the purpose of labeling certain Soviet weapons "destabilizing." The Soviets did not accept the argument that their heavy ICBMs were destabilizing. Second, the Soviets insisted that throw-weight was not necessarily the most important measure of a missile's destructive potential. Accuracy and yield were more critical to a missile's effectiveness, they noted. Third, Soviet officials denounced U.S. calls for throw-weight reductions to equal levels as inconsistent with the principle of "equality and equal security," meaning it would require the Soviets to give up more than the U.S.

⁸⁸ Charles W. Corddry, "U.S. Offers Soviets Draft of Arms Treaty," Baltimore Sun, 8 July 1983.

D. Soviet Policy Towards Reductions in "Heavy" ICBMs

Another dimension of the U.S. concern with the destabilizing features of the Soviet strategic nuclear posture was the question of "heavy" ICBMs. The definition of a "heavy" ICBM had evolved throughout the SALT I and II negotiations to eventually refer to the largest of Soviet and American missiles. For the Soviets, this included 308 SS-18s. For this U.S., this meant 54 Titan ICBMs. U.S. START proposals called for a reduction to 110 in Soviet "heavy" ICBMs.⁸⁹

The Soviet Union, however, adamantly rejected proposals for reductions in its land-based "heavy" ICBM force. Furthermore, at one point the Soviets tied U.S. efforts to reduce "heavy" missiles to proposals for limits on U.S. cruise missiles, arguing that the sides might trade-off asymmetric areas of relative advantages. Again, the Soviets invoked the principle of "equality and equal security" saying an agreement to reductions in "heavy" ICBMs would be one-sided. This was, in effect, a claim to a unilateral right to deploy weapons of significantly greater potential than the other side had.

The Soviets also denounced U.S. efforts to secure reductions in "heavy" ICBMs in START as unwarranted attempts to interfere in what they considered a domestic matter -- the structuring of their strategic nuclear force posture.

Later in START (i.e. by the end of 1987), the Soviets accepted such reductions, apparently convinced that fixed land-based ICBMs were increasingly vulnerable to new generations of U.S. weapons and should be replaced by mobile

⁸⁹ Charles W. Corddry, "U.S. Offers Soviets Draft of Arms Treaty," Baltimore Sun, 8 July 1983.

rail- or road-based missiles. Soviet acquiescence on this point was also probably linked to undisclosed American concessions.

E. Soviet Policy Towards Warheads as a Unit of Limitation

The U.S. consistently pressed for an overall ceiling on strategic nuclear warheads, as well as various warhead sublimits in START. The Soviets denounced these efforts as "selective," and "unequal."

The Soviets never proposed direct limits on warheads in this period of the START negotiations, other than to propose unspecified "equal limits" for both sides -- their position as of the end of Round Five in the fall of 1983 prior to walking out.⁹⁰

The Soviets did, however, propose at this point that SALT II-type fractionation limits on MIRV systems be included in START (Soviet proposal as of Fall 1983).⁹¹

While the U.S. side placed emphasis on limiting the numbers of warheads, the Soviets continued to stress missile numbers as the basic unit of account in START.⁹²

On 28 May 1982, Pravda published a statement saying the U.S. intends "to retain virtually intact the mainstays of its nuclear arsenal" while compelling the Soviets to "reduce the most modern type of armaments." In an obvious response to

⁹⁰ National Academy of Sciences, Nuclear Arms Control: Background and Issues, p. 67.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² William Beecher, "US to Alter Arms-Limit Proposal," Boston Globe, 20 May 1983.

trends in United States thinking on START, it further reiterated that the Soviet Union sought reductions in both warheads and missiles, but the warhead limits would be more or less indirect.⁹³

On 17 July 1983 Pravda published an editorial criticizing the U.S. for "attempts at legalizing its unprecedented arms race under the cover of the talks" and denied that the U.S. position in the talks had undergone any change. It sought to distinguish the Soviet approach to START from the U.S. approach by saying that Washington had adopted "selective" reduction policy, singling out certain groups of strategic weapons for reduction while leaving others unlimited:

The USSR stands for a comprehensive approach -- all strategic delivery vehicles would be subject to restrictions and reductions in their aggregate, not in some artificially singled out groups or portions. Likewise, all nuclear warheads would be taken into account within the framework of the agreed-upon ceiling. The Soviet Union concretely proposes that the total aggregate level of nuclear warheads on strategic delivery vehicles of the sides should be below the number of nuclear warheads which the United States now has. Exactly this approach is the basis of the draft treaty which was submitted by the Soviet delegation in Geneva.⁹⁴

Soon after the United States submitted its draft START treaty, the Soviet Union offered a "new" set of proposals, probably intended to offset the impression of greater American flexibility. It retained the 1,800 overall ceiling on "strategic nuclear delivery vehicles" (SNDV) while dividing

⁹³ Pravda, 28 May 1983.

⁹⁴ Pravda, 17 July 1983, p. 5.

this into three categories for long-range, cruise missile-equipped bombers, submarine- and land-based ballistic missiles, and land-based MIRVed missiles. The limits were to be achieved in phases by 1990. But here again, there were to be no direct limits on warheads.

The Soviet proposal (of July 1983) continued to make no mention of warhead limits, although the U.S. side had been emphasizing placing limits on the numbers of warheads for some time, rather than simply limits on the number of launchers -- a major U.S. criticism of SALT I and II.⁹⁵

F. Observations on the 1982-1983 Time Frame

The following observations are derived from the foregoing analysis:

First, the Soviet Union resisted U.S. attempts to restructure its strategic nuclear force posture in START and INF. The Soviets did this by refusing to consider "deep cuts" in land-based strategic missile forces and ceilings on certain categories of warheads.

Second, the Soviet Union sought to protect the essential features of its strategic modernization program, while halting that of the United States. It did this by proposing a ban on

95 For details on the Soviet July 1983 proposal, see: Michael Getler, "Soviets Advance Revised Proposal On Arms Limits," Washington Post, 13 July 1983; Hedrick Smith, "Soviet Broadens Arms Proposals; Hope Seen By U.S.," New York Times, 14 July 1983; Charles W. Corddry, "Soviet Arms Offer Said to Keep Rockets," Baltimore Sun, 14 July 1983; William Beecher, "Arms Talks: A Hint of Flexibility," Boston Globe, 14 July 1983; and, William Beecher, "Soviet Hinting Thaw?" Boston Globe, 15 July 1983.

strategic modernization, but applied it to systems not yet tested as of the date of negotiations.

Third, the Soviets resisted using warheads as a major direct unit of limitation, and demonstrated a definite preference for "launchers" or "missiles" as the principal units of limitation in their START proposals. While warheads would have been indirectly restricted by ceilings on the numbers of launchers or missiles, as well as on the fractionation of MIRVed missiles, such limits (as proposed in the Soviet START position, i.e. no more than 10 warheads per MIRVed launcher) would have allowed a significant expansion in the numbers of warheads available to the Soviet Union for targeting against the United States. This would have been the case since many systems the Soviets were proposing for the 10 warhead limit did not then carry a total of 10 warheads (i.e. certain ICBMs).

Fourth, the Soviets also resisted the U.S. attempt to focus limitations on land-based systems, claiming in several public statements that they wished to focus on the entire strategic situation, rather than single out specific systems for reductions. To be sure, the Soviets adopted this position as a countermove to U.S. proposals for reductions in Soviet "heavy" ICBMs, considered by the U.S. to be the most destabilizing because of their potential to disarm the U.S. ICBM force in a surprise attack. But there is another dimension to this Soviet position. It reveals ostensible Soviet attitudes towards what constitutes "destabilizing" weapons. In the START negotiations, the Soviets often defined U.S. cruise missiles and SLBMs as destabilizing because of their potential for short-warning attacks.

This distinction between the U.S. definition of destabilizing weapons (i.e. weapons that are easily preempted

by a first strike) versus the Soviet definition (that which can strike with little warning time) may show that the Soviets are relatively unconcerned with riding out a first strike surprise attack, or that they intend to respond to warning of an imminent attack by "launching on warning" -- something the Soviets have denied as their official policy, but which they have posture themselves to do, have developed the strategic doctrine for, and appear to be protecting in their START proposals.

Much of the Soviet START position at the end of 1983 closely paralleled that of specific SALT I and II provisions, and appeared designed to place severe restrictions on the Reagan administration's advertised U.S. strategic modernization program.

IV. SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS STRATEGIC
ARMS REDUCTIONS, 1984-1987A. Introductory Remarks

This period differs from the 1982-1983 phase of START principally in that Soviet policy toward reductions in offensive strategic arms was subordinated to calls for restrictions on future U.S. strategic defense options (the Soviets denied any intention on their own part to deploy strategic defenses) rather than to demands that the U.S. cancel its NATO INF modernization plans. Soviet START policy also underwent substantial changes in terms of numbers of weapons Moscow was willing to cut. However, Soviet START policy continued to reflect a clear rejection of U.S. concepts of stability and deterrence, boding ill for long-term prospects of Soviet compliance with a START agreement.

There are a number of notable dimensions to Soviet START policy in this period. The Soviet Union became much more interested in deep reductions of offensive force levels after the President's Strategic Defense Initiative became institutionalized in the U.S. through initially strong congressional funding support. Soviet strategic arms proposals in this period are much more characteristic of historical Soviet objectives for a "nuclear free world," in that they are reminiscent of Soviet proposals for "General and Complete Disarmament" (GCD) from the 1950s and 1960s.

Also, in the aftermath of the collapsed INF and START negotiations, the Soviet Union immediately initiated several arms control efforts, or reemphasized previous arms control forums. These proposals were probably intended in part to serve as distractions from the fact that the Soviets had

suspended bilateral U.S.-Soviet discussions on strategic nuclear weapons during 1984, and to offset criticism of the USSR for having derailed the nuclear arms control process. They included the following initiatives:

- 1) In January 1984, the Soviets made certain proposals regarding chemical weapons;
- 2) In the summer of 1984 the Soviets initiated new proposals on space arms and ASAT weapons;
- 3) The Soviets reintroduced a "no first-use" of nuclear weapons proposal in January 1985;⁹⁶
- 4) On 7 April 1985 the Soviets offered a moratorium on INF deployments (again reviving an earlier position);
- 5) On 17 April 1985 the Soviets announced a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing.⁹⁷

In the midst of these proposals, the Soviets continued deploying new weapons.⁹⁸ Such developments in the 1985 to 1987 period included: the first operational cruise of the Delta IV SSBN equipped with the new SS-N-23 SLBM; the deployment of the USSR's fifth generation road-mobile ICBM (the SS-25); test flights of the SS-18 Mod 4 follow-on ICBM, as well as test flights of a new version of the SS-20 missile;

⁹⁶ Los Angeles Times, 30 Jan. 1985.

⁹⁷ Los Angeles Times, 18 April 1985.

⁹⁸ For example, see New York Times, 9 June 1985; and, U.S. Department of Defense, Soviet Military Power, various issues.

the equipping of 50 operational Bear H bombers fitted with 3,000 kilometer-range, nuclear capable AS-15 ALCMs; the deployment of a new generation of mobile surface-to-air missiles with potential ballistic missile intercept capabilities; the launchings of a new Kirov-class cruiser, a new Sierra-class nuclear powered attack submarine, and a fifth Typhoon-class SSBN.

B. Soviet Policy Towards "Deep Cuts"

Four fundamental dimensions of Soviet policy toward strategic arms reductions in general concern us at this point. First, as they had done with U.S. INF modernization, the Soviets now made American concessions regarding strategic defense programs a virtual precondition for negotiations or agreements on reducing long-range offensive weapons. Second, the Soviets re-introduced their earlier proposals for a freeze or and moratorium on the development and deployment of new strategic weapons. Third, the Soviet attitude toward strategic arms reductions in general was characterized by a high degree of propaganda. Fourth, as in the earlier period, Soviet criticisms of the U.S. approach to arms reductions is also generally indicative of Soviet priorities and objectives. These four issues are examined below.

1. Linkage to SDI

Beginning in mid-1984, the Soviets focused their diplomatic initiatives on a broad range of fronts against the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative. An arms control solution to evolving strategic defense programs replaced eliminating

NATO INF deployments as the chief Soviet priority in arms control talks, and as the major precondition to "deep cuts" in long-range offensive nuclear weapons.⁹⁹

2. Renewal of Soviet Freeze Proposals

Earlier Soviet freeze proposals were explicitly aimed at blocking President Reagan's strategic modernization program, that had called for substantial upgrading of all three legs of the U.S. strategic nuclear triad. The specific targets of these freeze proposals included the MX ICBM, the Trident D-5 SLBM, and the various U.S. cruise missile programs. The revived freeze proposals in 1985 appeared aimed at a different target altogether. As the following passage shows, the new target for Soviet freeze proposals was the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative:

The point of departure that would enable us to lay the foundations for subsequent reductions in arms stockpiles would be a freeze imposed for the whole duration of the Geneva talks on the sides' nuclear arsenals and an end to the preparations for the development of weapons to be deployed in space.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ See, for example, B. Dubrovin, "Geneva: At the START of the Round," Pravda, 5 June 1985, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Lev Semeyko, "Detente: Who Votes 'No'," Sovetskaya Rossiya, 29 May 1985, p. 5.

3. Soviet Proposals for Weapons Reductions

During this period, there was an early emphasis in Soviet declaratory policy on modest cuts in strategic weapons, on the order of 25 percent. The Soviets later proposed 50 percent and even 100 percent reductions, before returning to a more conservative stance in their START negotiating posture.

The 25 percent reductions the Soviets proposed in the first and second rounds of START in 1985 was basically a revival of their 1982-1983 position. The primary unit of account would have been strategic nuclear delivery vehicles (SNDVs), and the proposed cuts would have resulted in equal ceilings of about 1800 launchers. Throughout this period the focus was on reducing "strategic means" -- a Soviet phrase referring to the launch vehicles rather than the warheads.¹⁰¹

When, later in the talks, the Soviets introduced radical proposals for reductions in strategic arms, they were, in effect, reviving Soviet General and Complete Disarmament proposals from the 1950s and early 1960s.

The public nature of these proposals, accompanied by considerable fanfare, suggests they had primarily a propaganda intent.

4. Soviet Criticisms of U.S. Proposals for "Deep Cuts"

There were three basic themes to Soviet criticisms of the U.S. approach to START in the 1984-1987 period, and all three were repetitions from the earlier timeframe. First, Soviet commentators claimed that the U.S. sought to apply cuts

¹⁰¹ See, for example, "What Is Hampering Progress at the Geneva Talks," Pravda, 1 Aug. 1985, pp. 4-5.

disproportionately, and selectively, only to ballistic missile warheads.¹⁰² In Soviet propaganda literature, its own approach was often contrasted with this American policy by saying the USSR sought broader cuts, and did not single out certain categories of weapons systems. Second, the Soviets continued to claim that the U.S. approach to START was aimed at forcing a fundamental restructuring of the Soviet strategic nuclear posture, by calling for specific sublimits on ballistic missiles, and especially land-based ICBMs.

Third, Soviet authors frequently claimed that the selective nature of the cuts proposed by Washington would allow the U.S. to add 8,000 cruise missiles (on 400 bombers), and even to reach a total of 15,000 warheads (despite a proposed START limit of 5,000 to 6,000) by adding Short-Range Attack Missiles (SRAMs) and gravity bombs to U.S. strategic bombers, which Soviet sources counted at 600.¹⁰³ These figures greatly exaggerated the number of operational U.S. bombers, and probably counted non-strategic bombers such as the FB-111 as well.

¹⁰² This was, in fact, a valid observation. The U.S. considered ballistic missile warheads, particularly on heavy Soviet ICBMs, to be the most destabilizing.

¹⁰³ Examples of this kind of Soviet commentary can be found in Vladimir Chernyshev, Tass dispatch of 10 June 1985, given in FBIS, Daily Report: Soviet Union, 11 June 1985, pp. AA2-AA3; and, "What Is Hampering Progress at the Geneva Talks," Pravda, 1 Aug. 1985, pp. 4-5.

C. Soviet Policy Towards Throw-weight Limits

During this period the Soviets continued to resist U.S. attempts to introduce direct throw-weight limitations into the terms of a draft START agreement.

In an interview at the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Soviet Chief of the General Staff Akhromeyev made the following comment relating to Soviet views of "stabilizing" versus "destabilizing" weapons, and throw-weight as a unit of limitation in the arms talks:

The notion of the "particularly destabilizing" qualities of the Soviet ICBM's is a discovery which saw the light only in 1980. The present U.S. Administration qualifies the means that are most developed in the U.S.S.R. and constitute the backbone of its defenses, in particular the ICBM's, as "destabilizing" and subject to scrapping, while calling those means the U.S. is stronger in, namely ballistic missiles on submarines, heavy bombers with 20-28 long-range cruise missiles each, as stability and security factors.

We cannot agree to such an understanding. One should not assess the power of missiles solely by their ability to destroy fully hardened installations while laying particular emphasis on their throw weight. The throw weight is not the only and not the principal criterion for the warhead yield.

A more important criterion is the accuracy of a warhead. A twofold increase in accuracy leads to an eightfold growth in warhead yield. It means the the throw weight cannot be considered as the basis for estimating the country's strategic defense potential. The U.S. proposal on that score is aimed at undermining unilaterally the strategic nuclear forces of the U.S.S.R.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Leslie Gelb in New York Times, 13 Oct. 1985, and 18 Oct. 1985.

D. Soviet Policy Towards Warheads as a Unit of Limitation

The Soviets had proposed severe restrictions on Trident submarine and missile deployment in the first rounds of START in 1982 and 1983, but dropped these proposals by July 1983. However, the July 1983 Soviet proposal also dropped the earlier Soviet proposal for banning or strictly limiting additional missile submarines of the U.S. Ohio (Trident) class and equivalent Soviet submarines, and the proposed total ban on deploying Trident II missiles then being developed by the United States.¹⁰⁵

Also, the Soviet Union had dropped (as of the fall of 1983) earlier proposals for banning Trident II, long-range air-launched cruise missiles, limiting the U.S. deployment of Trident submarines from four to six, and a call to reduce the number of missile tubes on future Trident submarines from 24 to 16.¹⁰⁶ As noted, these positions did not differ appreciably from the July 1983 Soviet START proposals.

Soviet efforts in the period 1984-1987 regarding limitations on warheads seem to have focused on reducing U.S. SLBM weapons. These weapons currently have limited counterforce capability due to their combination of low accuracy and small yield, but the Soviets must take two facts

¹⁰⁵ For details on the Soviet July 1983 proposal, see: Michael Getler, "Soviets Advance Revised Proposal On Arms Limits," Washington Post, 13 July 1983; Hedrick Smith, "Soviet Broadens Arms Proposals; Hope Seen By U.S.," New York Times, 14 July 1983; Charles W. Corddry, "Soviet Arms Offer Said to Keep Rockets," Baltimore Sun, 14 July 1983; William Beecher, "Arms Talks: A Hint of Flexibility," Boston Globe, 14 July 1983; and, William Beecher, "Soviet Hinting Thaw?" Boston Globe, 15 July 1983.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

into consideration. First, U.S. submarine-based nuclear warheads make up a majority of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, certainly a vast majority of the survivable warheads. The Soviets must take seriously the threat of retaliation by several thousand SLBM warheads. Second, the United States will soon deploy the new Trident D-5 with improved range, accuracy, and yield, resulting in the first significant counterforce capability at sea.

A principal Soviet objective at START in view of these two considerations has been to reduce the number of U.S. sea-based warheads down to a level more manageable by its ABM system. Fewer warheads delivered from fewer platforms could potentially simplify the defensive task of the Moscow ABM system. Fewer warheads would ease the burden on the Soviet ABM interceptors, while fewer launch platforms would decrease the number of directions from which U.S. missiles would be approaching, greater simplifying the target acquisition and tracking requirements for Soviet ABM radar.

There is also the possibility that Soviet objectives in focusing on the reduction of SLBM warheads include increasing the effectiveness of Soviet air defense surface-to-air missile systems. These missiles reportedly have acquired dual capability against both air-breathing and ballistic threats. If this is so, they may have limited capabilities against incoming SLBM warheads, and could make a potential contribution to the Moscow area ABM system by thinning out inbound warheads prior to their interception by Moscow-based ABM missiles. Reducing the SLBM warhead threat through arms control agreements would certainly augment the value of such dual-capable air defense missiles.

An overture made by the Soviets prior to the Geneva summit in November 1985 was touted as a "quick cut" in ICBMs,

calling for the superpowers to reduce land-based intercontinental missiles by 200-300 as a demonstration of good faith. However, the Soviet proposal referred to launchers and not warheads, and could have been carried out by the Soviet Union through the retirement of their oldest and least effective ICBMs due to have been retired four years earlier, while the U.S. would have had to make its cuts from its active Minuteman ICBM force.¹⁰⁷

In October 1987, Soviet leader Gorbachev again signalled the Soviet emphasis on reducing U.S. SLBM warheads. He offered to accept the U.S.-proposed sublimit of 3,300 land-based warheads if the United States agreed to reduce its submarine-launched ballistic missiles from 5,640 to 2,000 warheads.¹⁰⁸ Acceptance of this proposal would place severe constraints the U.S. Trident program, if not doom it altogether. Of course, this has been a major Soviet objective since the beginning of START in June 1982. A further Soviet condition for accepting the U.S.-proposed sublimits on ballistic missile warheads appeared to be American acceptance of an agreement not to withdraw from the ABM Treaty for a ten year period.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Don Oberdorfer and David Hoffman, "Quick Cut in ICBMs Proposed by Soviets," Washington Post, 14 Nov. 1985.

¹⁰⁸ R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. May Drop Warhead Limit Demand," Washington Post, 4 Dec. 1987.

¹⁰⁹ The Arms Control Reporter, 22-23 October, p. 611.B.418-419.

V. CONCLUSIONS

In START the United States was trying to alter the existing U.S.-Soviet strategic relationship -- the Soviet Union was attempting to preserve it. American officials were discontented with the nuclear strategic balance as it had evolved by the beginning of the 1980s because of the perceived vulnerability of the U.S. deterrent force to Soviet preemption in a surprise attack or escalated crisis. In particular, U.S. officials and analysts were concerned about the accumulated Soviet superiority in hard-target warheads on land-based ICBMs. These were weapons ideally suited for only one mission: preemptively destroying the other side's nuclear retaliatory capability before it could be launched. In START, the U.S. sought to rectify this destabilizing situation by seeking substantial reductions in Soviet "heavy" ICBMs, direct limits on warheads, and throw-weight limitations.

On the other hand, Soviet satisfaction with the existing strategic relationship was evidenced in Moscow's emphasis on securing a freeze on new deployments of strategic weapons, and in seeking to preserve the SALT II framework of limitations on strategic nuclear delivery vehicle ceilings and modernization restrictions. Apart from these priorities, other Soviet negotiating objectives included heading off emerging U.S. nuclear weapon systems with the potential for upsetting the USSR's advantages in nuclear strength and restoring the credibility of the U.S. nuclear retaliatory force, such as long-range air-launched cruise missiles and new Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Soviet START priorities can help predict Soviet propensities for compliance or noncompliance with a START

accord in the future. Specifically, Soviet policy toward strategic arms reductions has been manifested on two levels. On the one level, the Soviet Union has made much propaganda about its commitment to disarmament, particularly strategic nuclear weapon disarmament. Thus, it has certain strong incentives to publicly propose and insist upon reductions in offensive nuclear forces. These public declarations would indicate an ostensibly high Soviet priority on reducing strategic nuclear weapon stockpiles for the sake of minimizing the chances for a devastating nuclear war of global dimensions.

On the second level, the Soviet negotiating stance on nuclear force reductions during the period 1982 to 1987 has been subject to dramatic changes and occasional reverses of policy. This clearly demonstrates that Soviet policy on strategic nuclear force reductions has been subordinate to other factors, notably NATO INF deployments (during the 1982 to 1983 period) and U.S. SDI intentions (during the 1984 to 1987 period).

Why has Soviet policy toward strategic arms reductions been subordinate to other considerations? There are several reasons why the Soviets may have considered other issues of greater importance than reducing strategic nuclear weapons, despite the importance attached to this issue by official Soviet propaganda.

First, the Soviets had a substantial superiority in this category of the U.S.-Soviet nuclear balance, thus the U.S. lacked the bargaining leverage to sustain Soviet interests in deep cuts in these types of weapons.

Second, from the viewpoint of Soviet military deterrence and targeting requirements, strategic nuclear forces play the most crucial role, the Soviets may not be prepared to

downgrade the function of long-range nuclear weapons to the extent called for in arms control proposals;

Third, other categories of U.S. weapons or weapons programs posed greater threats to specific Soviet military objectives -- NATO's INF modernization efforts threatened to militate the effects of Soviet nuclear hegemony on the Central Front in Europe, and the U.S. SDI program threatens Soviet advantages in space and strategic defense programs.

What do these likely Soviet calculations tell us about the prospects of Soviet compliance with strategic arms reductions? Should the Soviet Union decide to sign a strategic arms reduction agreement along the lines now being considered in Geneva, it will probably be the result of one or more of the following considerations:

1. Such an agreement was conditional upon resolution of other, more important issues -- such as INF and SDI. For example, such an agreement was required to persuade the U.S. to abandon its SDI efforts;
2. Such an agreement did not unduly restrict Soviet offensive nuclear force modernization;
3. Such an agreement promoted Soviet foreign policy objectives with respect to detente. That is, it fostered greater cooperation on trade and credits with the West; (It should be assumed that this would be an inevitable bi-product of any Soviet arms control commitment.)
4. Such an agreement did not provide verification procedures that intruded unwarrantedly on the operational security of the Soviet military, or on Soviet nuclear force procurement processes;
5. Such an agreement was worded in a manner allowing for a wide latitude of interpretation.

Owing to the fact that Soviet START negotiating policy has been subordinated to other considerations, it is reasonable to assume that Soviet compliance with any START agreement may also be subordinated to extraneous considerations. What factors may influence or condition Soviet compliance (or non-compliance) with a START agreement?

Any significant change in the strategic situation at the time of the signing of an agreement (including any projected change with potentially significant impact on the strategic balance) is likely to be taken by the Soviets as an excuse for selective non-compliance with a START agreement. The Soviets are not likely to delay a response to such changes until after seeking redress of their concerns through diplomatic channels, as would the United States. This does not mean that they will forego making an issue of such changes in diplomatic forums, merely that they will demonstrate their willingness to respond to such changes whether or not they are reversed or redressed by Western powers in diplomatic channels.

Soviet activities relating to a START agreement will almost certainly fall into one or more of three different categories of possible interpretation:

- (1) they will clearly comply with an agreement;
- (2) they will violate the letter of an agreement;
- (3) they will violate the spirit of an agreement.

It is probable that many Soviet actions with respect to a future START agreement will be interpreted by the U.S. as violating the spirit of an agreement because the Soviets have entirely different conceptions of strategic concepts such as

"stability" and "deterrence," as discussed elsewhere in this report.

Furthermore, many Soviet actions are likely to represent violations of the letter of an agreement from the U.S. perspective because the Soviet military will fail to interpret the obligations undertaken by the Soviet leadership in a fashion that corresponds to the American interpretation.

U.S. success in START must ultimately be evaluated in terms of Soviet compliance with a future START agreement. The signing of an agreement in and of itself cannot be viewed as the principal measure of arms control success. How well the respective parties to the agreement comply with its terms, and how effectively this compliance contributes to deterrence and stability should be regarded as the minimum acceptable standard of success in START as well as in other areas of arms control.

To have a truly effective and enduring arms control regime, it is essential that the parties to an agreement share common views of what constitutes deterrence and stability. They must agree on what types of weapons, policies, and postures are "destabilizing" and which are "stabilizing." Otherwise there is likely to be disagreement on interpreting the terms of agreements, since a written document cannot always specify in detail every contingency that may arise in process of implementing an agreement.

This requirement for mutual agreement on common interests in deterrence and stability has been recognized by U.S. analysts and decisionmakers since the early days of Soviet-

American arms negotiations.¹¹⁰ The START record, as examined below, shows a continuing discordance of U.S. and Soviet views and prescriptions relating to the establishment of a durable strategic stability. This means that the U.S. and Soviet Union will probably enter a strategic arms reduction agreement with incompatible policies for maintaining nuclear deterrence. Compliance problems are bound to arise unless the U.S. recognizes this difficulty and is prepared to deal with it effectively.

¹¹⁰ See, for example, Hedley Bull, The Control of the Arms Race, (New York: Praeger, 1961), pp. 9-10; Robert McNamara recognized the requirement for a common view of stability with regard to the ABM Treaty, see Michael Charlton, From Deterrence to Defence: The Inside Story of Strategic Policy, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 4-5. Gerard Smith, chief U.S. negotiator for SALT I also acknowledged this: "If there was to be success at SALT, I felt that the two sides would to some extent have to pursue a similar strategic doctrine...." See Gerard Smith, Doubletalk: The Story of the First Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1980), p. 24. This theme is further explored by the present author in a paper titled "US-Soviet Relations and Arms Control: Prospects for the Late 1980s," prepared for delivery at the 1985 New Faces Conference on the Future of Nuclear Arms Control, held at the Villa Serbelloni Rockefeller Conference Center, Bollagio, Italy, July 1985. jointly sponsored by the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Arms Control Association.

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